

Introduction

This issue of the «Outlines of Global Transformations» is devoted to the United States of America. It is surely a vain endeavor trying to squeeze all the aspects of life of the most powerful nation in the world onto the pages of one magazine. Having accepted this, the issue's contributors have focused their attention mostly on its social and cultural as well as economical dimensions. They have strived to look into those barely discernible pressure points that undermine the power of the American colossus. For this reason this special issue will not feature controversial articles on foreign policy, rivalry of the Great Powers, and international relations.

Part of present day American society's problems still stems from the legacy of the Civil War of 1861–1865, segregation and legalized white racism in the southern states. Donald Trump's presidential election win flared up the smoldering conflict around Confederate monuments. And this «memory war», however it be, affects the very foundations of national identity of many modern Americans. This subject is addressed in the article by N.M. Travkina. According to the author, American society has always had elusive historical memory, and this factor has altogether helped right conservative America in its Confederate monuments preservations efforts. Thereat it is remarkable that on the territory of the victorious northern states there are no memorials glorifying the Federal heroes and their feats accomplished in the course of the Civil war. The ultimate focus while erecting Confederate monuments and memorials was not on memorializing the past, but on establishing the society of white supremacy in years to come.

Well known America was built by immigrants. Multiculturalists tend to view

USA as a near-on perfect example of modern dynamic society comprising multiple nations and confessions, its primary components efficiently remelted into single and consolidated civil nation. At the same time the notorious WASP – The White Anglo-Saxon Protestants – still remain the dominating ethno-cultural American community. Despite declaring indisputable isonomy, promoted political correctness and positive discrimination, Afro-American population altogether has a lower social status as compared to whites. This background has resulted, among other things, in afrocentrism analyzed in the article by D.M. Bondarenko and N.E. Khokholkova.

Afrocentrists were driven by strive to overcome trauma caused by the sense of second-ratedness of Afro-Americans' own social and cultural identity, their social abjection in American society where they are still viewed as descendants of slaves. The need for psychologically redemptive myth of the great African civilization has largely provoked the emergence of this typical «imagined community».

Slavery experience had a decisive influence on the formation of Afro-American identity. That is why afrocentrists tend to emphasize racial rather than social segregation. Thereat socially Afro-American community that is actually even more inhomogeneous than the white community keeps getting ever more internally diverse. In fact, afrocentrism has never expanded beyond the circle of intellectuals worried by the loss of “roots” within which it once originated. Up to this date it remains an interesting manifestation of social thought, but has never evolved into a significant social factor.

The development of school education in the USA is dealt with in the article by

D.A. Lanko. Unlike higher education system K-12 education in the USA is not considered by Russia and Europe as an example to follow. Probably this is due to the fact that K-12 education is estimated from the viewpoint of school children training, and higher education – from the viewpoint of its appeal to graduates. According to the author, the USA educational reform is not able to solve the task of increasing the average level of academic progress as it basically strives to promote the creation of privileged schools while most of retarded students are concentrated in public schools.

Several articles in this issue touch upon various economical aspects. The article by M.Yu. Golovnin analyzes the changes in the US monetary policy in 2000-2017, when the country experienced two crises – stock market crisis at the turn of the century and the deeper world crisis in the end of 2000s. The article also shows the effect the US FRS policy has on national economies of the developing countries – in particular through its influence on the changes of foreign assets value, direct and indirect influence on oil and other commodity prices.

The article by L.F. Lebedeva focuses on President Donald Trump's administration's fiscal innovations associated with signing of Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in late 2017. It is demonstrated that lower tax rates, shifting of income tax brackets, increasing of standard tax deductions and other changes affect to a greater or lesser degree all taxpayers though differently. The author concludes that despite various social consequences of this act the changes are generally aimed to raise personal responsibility, to relieve federal budget of its obligations to support destitute (by American standards) able-bodied citizens, and on a bigger scale – to reduce government involvement in the development of American society, to create economically encouraged behavior models of

natural and legal persons in order to boost economic growth, to strengthen the positions of American businesses and to create jobs in the USA.

The article by A.V. Frolov deals with public and private partnership (PPP) in the US innovation sector. While altogether PPP has become an additional liberalization tool boosting economic growth, in innovation sector such partnership is often key to success, especially for the development of new breakthrough technologies («Industrial revolution 4.0»).

The article by V.S. Vasiliev focuses on the idea that until 1770s the world in fact had not been familiar with economic growth phenomenon. Then, in the course of the next century until 1870 economic growth phenomenon could be spoken of with certain reservations. And only in the next 100 years until 1970s had economic growth truly shown itself.

As noted in the article by S.S. Dmitriev, the USA first appeared on the global economical stage as a stronghold of protectionism. It is with unprecedented ease that the modern USA forces their partners into abiding by the rules of international trade as interpreted by the American party. Despite commodity trade deficit the USA run a service trade and capital flow surplus with most of the counterparty countries.

V.G. Varnavskiy gives a modern production formula embracing three key components with the USA being a laboratory, China – a factory, and the whole world – consumers. He asks if the USA's loss of leadership evident in certain macroeconomic indicators can be regarded as a proof that the established pattern of international relations has been broken? His article features some serious arguments for giving a negative answer.

China's success is evident mostly in fairly low-level innovations. Judging by qualitative indicators of economic growth, Washington is well ahead of Beijing. The

loss of leadership in terms of some volumetric indices has not yet become a serious problem for the USA. Although the USA is gradually yielding the first place in terms of quantitative macroeconomic indices to China, they still remain a global leader well ahead of other countries in terms of qualitative characteristics of production and business operations, technologies, degree of scientific and technological development, global finances.

According to the author, nobody in the world is particularly worried about China's economic situation, to be more precise – its deterioration prospects. What is produced and exported by Chinese companies can be produced at comparable process and quality by a dozen of other countries, e.g. in South or Southeast Asia. At the same time the whole world is worried about the state of American economy.

The article by I.V. Danilin is devoted to the US airspace industry. The author remains optimistic in his estimates of its prospects. In his opinion only a moderate decrease of growth rates might happen in future, as the economy will need some time to adjust to new technologies. Nev-

ertheless drivers for development of new space technologies, markets and economic entities continue to be relevant making the advent of new “golden age” of American space science quite possible.

Thus the United States quite firmly have their both feet on the ground in every sense. And it is too soon to speak of visible signs of American superpower decline, or losing of its leading positions to any existing and prospective competitor in economy, research and technology and, as a result, in pure military field. Nevertheless American society is far from being static. Microcracks gradually broaden across its base. In future in the course of dilution of Anglo-Saxon cultural core those cracks might get deeper and broader creating a direct threat both to economical dynamism and internal political stability.

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